

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIEP-03 AID-05 PC-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 NIC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TO THE SECRETARY'S PLANNED VISIT TO
INDIA MOUNTS

SUMMARY: THE INDIAN PRESS IS GIVING INCREASING, IF FLUCTUATING, ATTENTION TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO INDIA SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 27-30. (THE SHAH'S OCTOBER 2-5 VISIT, INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS, AND DOMESTIC PROBLEMS HAVE DOMINATED THE HEADLINES IN RECENT WEEKS.) THE INFLUENTIAL MODERATE/CONSERVATIVE PRESS, WHICH MOST LITERATE INDIANS READ, HAS VIEWED THE SECRETARY'S VISIT OPTIMISTICALLY AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL RESTORE THE BALANCE IN INDIA'S NON-ALIGNMENT AND HOPEFULLY ATTRACT RESOURCES TO ASSIST INDIA IN SOLVING ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ON THE OTHER HAND, LEFT-
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WING NEWSPAPERS PREDICTABLY HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTING THE RECENT

PUBLICITY ON CHILE, ATTACKING THE US FOR ATTEMPTING TO RECAPTURE GROUND LOST IN 1970-71, AND LAMENTING THAT "SOME IN THE COUNTRY" ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE VISIT WITH EXCESSIVE ENTHUSIASM. THE PRINCIPAL OUTLET FOR RIGHT-WING SENTIMENT IN INDIA, THE XENOPHOBIC MOTHERLAND, IS ECHOING THE LEFT-WING CHARGES. END SUMMARY.

1. OVER THE PAST THREE WEEKS THE TEMPO OF GENERAL PRESS PLAY AND EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO INDIA HAS INCREASED. (THE SHAH'S OCTOBER 2-5 VISIT, INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS, AND DOMESTIC PROBLEMS INCLUDING THE GOI'S ANTI-SMUGGLING OFFENSIVE--SEE NEW DELHI 13132--HAVE DOMINATED THE HEADLINES.) AN ASSUMPTION THAT THE VISIT WILL BE A HISTORIC MILESTONE AND WILL BRING ABOUT IMPROVED US-INDIA RELATIONS HAS UNDERPINNED MANY OF THE COMMENTARIES, WHICH HAVE REFLECTED THE WIDESPREAD ADMIRATION AMONG INDIANS FOR THE SECRETARY'S STYLE AND FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESSES. (THE EDITOR OF A WEEKLY PUBLICATION- CONGRESS-ORIENTED YOUNG INDIAN--IS PLUNGING AHEAD TO GET A BOOK ON DR. KISSINGER'S LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OFF THE PRESSES AND INTO THE BOOKSTALLS BEFORE LATE OCTOBER.) ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE REPLAY OF US PRESS STORIES ON THE OVERTHROW OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE, THE CIA AND AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S CABLE.

2. MODERATE/CONSERVATIVE PRESS: THE SECTION OF THE INDIAN PRESS, WHICH IS FREE OF LINKS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES AND WHICH MOST LITERATE INDIANS READ, HAS WELCOMED THE SECRETARY'S TRIP. SEVERAL LONG, BALANCED ANALYSES BY INDIA'S MORE PROMINENT EDITORS AND POLITICAL COMMENTATORS HAVE FOCUSED ON THE VISIT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GRADUAL UPSWING IN INDO-US RELATIONS, US INFLUENCE ON THE SUCCESS OF THE SIMLA PROCESS, INDIA'S BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA, AND INDIA'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. A SEPTEMBER 23 GENERAL REVIEW OF INDO-US RELATIONS BY STATEMAN EDITOR NIHAL SINGH, THOUGH PERHAPS MORE POLISHED, WAS TYPICAL OF THIS PERSPECTIVE. AFTER TRAVERSING MOST OF THE THEMES LISTED ABOVE, HE SUMMARIZED THAT THE VISIT "WILL SET THE SEAL ON A PROCESS OF RAPPROACHMENT INITIATED MORE THAN A YEAR AGO BY INDIA AND RECIPROCALLED BY THE USA." HE WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT THE RELATIONSHIP STRUCK BETWEEN MRS. GANDHI AND THE SECRETARY WILL BE CRUCIAL. IF BOTH ARE FRANK, HE OPINED, THEIR MEETING COULD "YIELD A DEBATE" AND OPEN "A NEW PHASE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDO-US RELATIONS." IN A SEPTEMBER 16 COMMENTARY ON THE KISSINGER VISIT, THE WELL-CONNECTED NEW DELHI CORRESPONDENT OF THE HINDU REPORTED THAT THE GOI "HAS BEEN ADOPTING A RATHER CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE IN SPELLING OUT ITS ECONOMIC NEEDS IN A CUT-AND DRIED FASHION. IT IS MAINTAINING A POSTURE OF DELIBERATE AMBIVALENCE IN MAKING INDIA'S FOOD REQUIREMENTS KNOWN BUT NOW SPECIFICALLY ASKING FOR CONCESSIONAL IMPORTS PENDING CLARIFICATION OF THE OVERALL AMERICAN ATTITUDES." IT IS ONLY AFTER THE POLITICAL

DECKS HAVE BEEN CLEARED THAT MRS. GANDHI AND DR. KISSINGER CAN SIT DOWN TO A SERIOUS DIALOGUE ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS,"HE WRITES. "IN SPITE OF THE IMMENSE PREPARATORY WORK DONE ON BOTH SIDES. . . VAGUELY NEGATIVE ATTITUDES PREVAILING IN THE SPHERE OF POLITICAL RELATIONS" CONTINUE. "THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IN DELHI IS THAT ONCE HE PLUNGES INTO THESE DISCUSSIONS WITH HIS CHARACTERISTIC ZEAL FOR TANGIBLE RESULTS, DR. KISSINGER WILL GENERATE THE NECESSARY DYNAMISM AND HOPE FOR CONCLUDING THE VISIT ON A POSITIVE NOTE."

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3. LEFT-WING CRITICISM: THE VOCAL PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) PRESS HAS LED THE LEFTIST OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE VISIT, WHICH IT HAS CHARACTERIZED AS A NEFARIOUS ATTEMPT BY THE US IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITS SUPPORTERS IN THE GOI AND CAPITALIST CIRCLES IN INDIA TO RECOVER THE GROUND LOST IN 1970-71.

ON SEPTEMBER 22 THE CPI-DOMINATED WEEKLY LINK LAMENTED THAT "SOME IN THE COUNTRY" ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TRIP AS THEY WOULD "TO THE SECOND COMING." A SEPTEMBER 21 ARTICLE APPEARING IN THE WIDELY CIRCULATED LEFTIST WEEKLY BLITZ TYPIFIED LEFT-WING CRITICISM OF THE VISIT WITH A SCATHING ATTACK ON THE SECRETARY PERSONALLY. IT ALSO CRITICIZED THE GOI FOR ITS "KNEE BENDING" IN ITS EAGERNESS "TO GET KISSINGER OVER HERE." THE CPI WEEKLY NEW AGE TURNED ITS GUNS ON AMBASSADOR KAUL IN WASHINGTON WHOM IT DESCRIBED AS A "MISFIT AND SERVILE" AND DEMANDED THAT HE "BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SACKED AND RECALLED" FOR PERSISTING IN HIS ATTEMPTS "TO GO ON CRINGING BEFORE KISSINGER" DESPITE THE REVELATIONS ON US INVOLVEMENT IN CHILE.

4. THE LEFT-WING ATTACK HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY OCCASIONAL SOVIET BROADCASTS IN ENGLISH AND THE VERNACULAR DESCRIBING ALLEGED CIA ACTIVITIES IN INDIA, CHILE AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES; AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S CABLE; AND MRS. GANDHI'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CHILE. A SEPTEMBER 18 BROADCAST (RADIO PEACE AND PROGRESS) IN ENGLISH, PRESUMABLY DESIGNED TO FEED INDIAN SUSPICIONS, WENT FURTHER THAN USUAL IN COMMENTING THAT "THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT POSSESSES A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF FACTS PROVING THAT THE CIA SUPPORTS AND FINANCES SUCH RIGHTIST PARTIES AS SWATANTRA AND JANA SANGH WHICH REGULARLY ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AND WHICH ORGANIZE DISTURBANCES AND ECONOMIC DIVERSION."

5. RIGHT-WING PRESS: THE MOST PROMINENT SPOKESMAN FOR THE RIGHT WING IN INDIA, THE JANA SANGH-ALIGNED, XENOPHOBIC MOTHERLAND, HAS ECHOED LEFTIST CRITICISM OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. IN A SEPTEMBER 2 EDITORIAL, THE MOTHERLAND'S EDITOR, FORMER NIEMAN FELLOW K.R. MALKANI, WROTE THAT "THE EDUCATION AND CULTURE OF KISSINGER ONLY PROVIDE A GLOSS FOR THE EXPANSIONIST AMERICAN POLICIES. THE LEARNED PROFESSOR IS ONLY SERVING THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX BETTER THAN IT CAN SERVE ITSELF.

6. COMMENT: THE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC LINE OF THE MODERATE PRESS REFLECTS THE HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS WHICH WE FIND QUITE WIDESPREAD WITHIN THE GOI. THE LEFTIST PRESS IS OBVIOUSLY ENGAGED IN AN IMMEDIATE CAMPAIGN TO TRY TO STEM THE IMPROVEMENT IN US-INDIA RELATIONS BY ATTACKING THE SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN. THIS STRATEGY IS NOT SURPRISING IN VIEW OF EARLIER REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED OF CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE INDIAN LEFT AND THE SOVIETS ABOUT TRENDS IN INDIAN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE US AND MORE "PRAGMATIC" DOMESTIC POLICY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE13196
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740280-0209
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741076/aaaacmua.tel
Line Count: 221
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <10 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS REACTION TO THE SECRETARY'S PLANNED VISIT TO INDIA MOUNTS
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, IN, US, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005